

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Our effort to save lives of survivors in Gaza is at breaking point

*Statement by Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for
Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator*

(New York, 6 January 2025) Our humanitarian effort in Gaza, already struggling, faces mounting obstacles.

Just three examples from the last couple of days alone. An Israeli strike seriously injured three people at a known food distribution point where a partner of the World Food Programme was operating. Israeli soldiers fired over 16 bullets at a clearly marked UN convoy at the checkpoint from the south to the north. Armed Palestinian gangs hijacked six fuel tankers entering from the Kerem Shalom crossing, leaving us hardly any fuel for aid operations.

These incidents are part of a dangerous pattern of sabotage and deliberate disruption. On Friday night, Israeli forces increased attacks during the movement of a 74-truck aid convoy. A drone strike hit a vehicle from the local community which was protecting part of the convoy. And just a few days ago, a UN mission out of Jabalya ran into hostile Israeli soldiers who threatened critical patients and arrested four of them.

The reality is that despite our determination to deliver food, water, and medicine to survivors, our efforts to save lives are at breaking point. There is no meaningful civil order. Israeli forces are unable or unwilling to ensure the safety of our convoys. Statements by Israeli authorities vilify our aid workers even as the military attacks them. Community volunteers who accompany our convoys are being targeted. There is now a perception that it is dangerous to protect aid convoys but safe to loot them.

Since the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023, over 45,000 Palestinians and 1,200 Israelis have been killed. The population of Gaza has endured more than 14 months of displacement, trauma, destruction of schools, hospitals and civilian infrastructure, and starvation.

As in my statement on 19 December, I call on UN Member States to insist that all civilians, and all humanitarian operations, are protected. This should not need to be said.

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